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SUBJECT: Sudanese Government Sends Mixed Signals on UN  
Peacekeeping Operation in Darfur

¶1. Summary: Following the May 5 signing of the Darfur peace agreement, the Sudanese Government is giving mixed signals to the international community regarding UN peacekeeping operations in Darfur. On May 5, a Ministry of the Interior spokesman stated that there was "no problem" with UN peacekeepers coming to Sudan. On May 7, however, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman stated that a decision remained up to the Government, and would be decided following an assessment of the situation. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release of May 7 credited the African Union for its role in helping Africa to solve African problems, but made no reference to a UN peacekeeping operation. End summary.

¶2. On May 5, Sudanese Government Secretary General for External Affairs in the Ministry of Information Bakri Mullah told AP, "We heard the appeal of the UN Secretary General (for UN peacekeepers to join those of the African Union)...Now there is no problem...There would be no problem to have the support of the United Nations and other partners, the U.S., and EU, to help in implementation."

¶3. However, in a May 7 statement, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman Jamal Muhammed Ibrahim told Reuters that reports that Sudan would welcome UN peacekeeping operations were not correct. He said, "This is not accurate. I don't know who made this statement...It has to come after an assessment by the Sudan government. If the need arises then Sudan may decide to do so. Otherwise no one has the right to impose foreign forces on Sudan...The situation is, after the signing of the peace accord, Sudan may look into any proposals to helping prevent tragedy...In this context if there is any possibility for UN forces to replace the African forces already in Darfur, this is the decision of Sudan and it is not going to be imposed on Sudan."

¶4. Ibrahim's remarks followed a press conference, during which the Ministry issued a press release that credited the African Union, but which made no mention of the United Nations or further peacekeeping efforts. The text of the release is as follows:

(Begin text - informal Embassy translation)

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

STATEMENT ON THE PEACE AGREEMENT IN DARFUR  
MAY 5, 2006

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sincerely congratulates the Sudanese people for the great historic achievement accomplished by signing Darfur Peace Agreement in Abuja, on Friday, May 5, 2006.

This agreement comes as an outcome of patient serious dialogue of long months; it asserts the Sudanese capability of resolving their differences and reaching common denominations that ensures fair political and economic sharing for all, devotes national unity and maintains the sovereignty of the country and safety of its territory.

Accordingly, the Government of Sudan has expressed its approval - associated with remarks and reservations- of the agreement document since April 27, 2006; then the Sudan Liberation Movement, chaired by Mini Arkoy and Dr. Abdel Rahman Musa, SLM's senior negotiators (Abdel Wahid Mohamed Nour's faction) signed on the agreement on Friday, May 5, 2006.

This agreement has responded to aspirations and hopes of the participants in the negotiation process. Hopefully, all the rest of the armed movements would join the agreement soon to commence implementation of the agreement on the ground.

The Ministry appreciates the great efforts exerted by the negotiators from the part of the government and the Sudan Liberation Movement for their persistence, patience, and capability of inventing creative solutions.

The Ministry expresses its great gratitude and appreciation for the sisterly State of Nigeria and His Highness President Obasanjo for hosting all the negotiations sessions between the government and the armed movement throughout the past two years; the Ministry also thanks the African Union Commission and its Chairman Alpha Konare, the senior mediator Dr. Salim

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Ahmed Salim, and the mediation team that made this great achievement possible.

The Ministry expresses its great appreciation to the international partners from the African Union and the representatives of the United States, Britain, Canada, United Nations, Arab League, and also the brothers from the Libyan Jamahirya, the Arab Republic of Egypt, and Eritrea; their good efforts had a great role in signing this agreement.

Singing the peace agreement in Darfur under the umbrella of the African Union and the direct auspices of the Chairman of the African Union in its former session, President Obasanjo and the present Chairman of the African Union, Sassou Nguesso, President of Democratic Congo, proves that the people of the continent of Africa are capable of resolving their problems by themselves- however their complicity was - and the international community has to assist them in doing that.

The peace agreement in Darfur would represent the greatest achievement for the African Union in the domain of mediation and making peace similarly to the comprehensive peace in Southern Sudan, the greatest achievement of another African Organizations: the IGAD.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs extends its appeal to the other armed movements in Darfur to resort to wisdom and common sense and to join the peace procession, to drop arms, and to head toward consolidating pillars of stability in Darfur.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterates commitment to work with all brothers, friends and the concerned international parties to make the peace process successful in Darfur and to support rehabilitation and construction efforts.

It considers this great achievement as an incentive to double efforts to restore the regional and international role of Sudan and to remove any distortion and confusion from the image of Sudan.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - KHARTOUM  
May 6, 2006

(End text)

STEINFELD